

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 106 844

CS 001 929

TITLE Communication Classes for Secondary School Pupils.
INSTITUTION Lafayette Parish School Board, La.
PUB DATE 74
NOTE 32p.; See CS 001 934 for "Effective Reading Programs: Summaries of 222 Selected Programs"; Not available in hard copy due to marginal legibility of original document

EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.76 HC Not Available from EDRS. PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS Affective Objectives; Communication Skills; Diagnostic Teaching; *Effective Teaching; *Individualized Reading; Learning Activities; *Reading Instruction; *Reading Programs; Reading Skills; *Remedial Reading; Secondary Education

IDENTIFIERS *Effective Reading Programs; Right to Read

ABSTRACT

This program, included in "Effective Reading Programs...", serves 1,674 students in grades 9-12, about 70 percent of whom are black. The program began in 1971 and consists of communication classes, one-semester courses that provide self-pacing, success-oriented instruction in reading for 50 minutes each day. The content is organized into two phases, and students can choose one of several courses at each phase. Participating students usually spend two semesters in the program and are either slow learners or underachievers as measured by two reading tests which they take in the spring before they are chosen to be in the program. To provide diagnostic-prescriptive instruction, the staff has developed a Guide to Materials for TEACING Basic Reading Skills, which teachers use as a reference when planning individual programs. The guide includes diagnostic reading tests and a reading analysis sheet, an index of reading skills and materials related to each skill, and suggestions for games and phonics puzzles. The program strongly emphasizes affective development, and at least half of each daily period is spent on open-ended discussions, role-playing, and oral and listening activities. (T0)

PROGRAM INFORMATION FORM

SECTION I -- Identification Information

Program Title Communication Classes for Secondary School Pupils (1)

Program Director Eula B. Moss Title ESAA Coordinator (2)

Address P. O. Drawer 2158, Lafayette, LA 70501 Phone (318) 232-2620 Ext. 253

Sponsor (school district or other) Lafayette Parish School Board (3)

Superintendent or director Harold Gauthe', Superintendent

Address P. O. Drawer 2158, Lafayette, Louisiana 70501 Phone (318) 232-2620
Ext. 300

Address where your program is operating

Lafayette Parish Secondary Schools -- (Acadiana High, Carencro High, (4)

Comeaux High, Lafayette High, Northside High) School Board Address:

P. O. Drawer 2158, Lafayette, Louisiana 70501

If you know any, please list one or two other school districts or sponsoring institutions where the total program named in Item 1 is being duplicated. (5)

Educational Facility

Address and Zip Code

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

SECTION II -- Program Screening Information

In this section, all questions are numbered at the right-hand edge; please answer each by marking the letter X in the appropriate box.

Is cognitive improvement in reading and reading-related skills a major focus of your program?

YES

☒

NO

☐

**

(6)

How long has your program been operating continuously?

Less than a year

☐

(7)

At least a year but less than two years

☐

Two years but less than three

☒

Three years or more

☐None of these
(If none, indicate why)*☐

Do you plan to keep your program operating for at least two more years (through the 1974-75 academic year)?

YES

☒

NO

☐

(If no, indicate why not)

(8)

Are evaluation reports (e.g., baseline test data, re-test data, measures of the program's effect) available?

None available and none planned

☐

**

(9)

None available but initial steps taken

☐

Available but not published

☒

Most recent publication prior to 1/1/68

☐

Most recent publication since 1/1/68

☐

Evaluation data are available for how long?

Three years or more

☐

(10)

More than two years, less than three

☒

More than one year, less than two

☐

Only one year

☐

Less than one year

☐

Not available

☐

**

Are the data evaluating your
total program approach available
for one or more sites?

More than one site (e.g.,
more than one school)

☒

(11)

Your site only

☐

Not available

☐

How many participants or
individual records are in-
cluded in the evaluation?

Less than 10

☐

**

(12)

10 to 29

☐

30 to 49

☐

50 to 99

☐

100 to 199

☐

200 to 499

☒

500 or more

☐

** If you marked any one of these boxes, do not complete this form or send program documents.
INSTEAD, please detach the first 3 pages and return them so that your response can be recorded.

What measures have been
analyzed to show the success
of your program?

Analysis of nationally
standardized reading
test results

YES

☒

NO

☐

(13)

Analysis of locally
developed reading test
results

☒
☐

(14)

Analysis of nationally
standardized general
ability measures

☐
☒

(15)

Analysis of locally
developed general
ability measures

☐
☒

(16)

Analysis of other program
success indicators (e.g.,
observations, affective
measures, teacher records,
questionnaires)

☒
☐

(17)

Other procedures
(Please specify)

☐
☒

(18)

Measures not yet
analyzed

☐
☒

(19)

Are up-to-date program descriptions available (e.g., staff, participants, schedules and activities)?

YES

☒

NO

☐

(20)

The mean test score of the students exceeds a specified norm

YES

☒

NO

☐

(21)

A mean gain over exactly one year is bigger than expected

☒☐

(22)

A mean gain for less than one year is bigger than expected

☐☒

(23)

What kind of improvement or gain by program students was found?

The mean of students in the program exceeds that of comparable students not in the program

☐

n/a

☐

(24)

The mean gain of students in the program is greater than for comparable students not in the program

☐

n/a

☐

(25)

Some other improvement, not one of these (Please specify)

☒☐

(26)

Attitudinal change; behavior changes
Improvement in conduct

No tests of significance were made

☒

(27)

No significant differences found yet

☐

How significant were the statistical results showing the effect of your program?

The program showed differences significant between the 5 and 10 percent one-tailed (10 to 20 two-tailed) level

☐

The program showed differences significant at better than the 5 percent one-tailed (10 percent two-tailed) level

☒

The program showed differences significant at better than the one percent one-tailed (two percent two-tailed) level

☐

By what amount does the annual per-pupil cost of this program exceed that of the regular district program?

Less than \$50

☒

(28)

\$50 to \$99

☐

\$100 to \$199

☐

\$200 to \$299

☐

\$300 to \$399

☐

\$400 to \$499

☐

\$500 to \$999

☐

\$1000 or more

☐

For what target population of students is your program designed?

Unselected cross section

YES

☐

NO

☒

(29)

Mentally retarded

☐☒

(30)

Bilingual

☐☒

(31)

Disadvantaged

☐☒

(32)

Physically handicapped
(deaf, blind, etc.)☐☒

(33)

Institutionalized

☐☒

(34)

Other groups
(Please specify below)☒☐

(35)

Slow learners and learners of average ability who are under-achieving.

Are 20 percent or more of your program students in any of the following categories?

American Eskimo, Aleut,
or Indian

YES

☐

NO

☒

(36)

Black

☒☐

(37)

Oriental or Asian

☐☒

(38)

Spanish-speaking

☐☒

(39)

White

☒☐

(40)

All others

*

☒☐

(41)

*French - (Acadian Cultural Groups - Black Acadian, White Acadian)

In which area do the majority of the program students live?

Rural and small town
of less than 10,000

☒

(42)

Small city of 10,000-199,000

☒

Small city suburbs

☐

Inner area in large city
of 200,000 or more

☐

Residential area in large city

☐

Suburbs of a large city

☐

What is the average family income
level of students in the program?

Low income (under \$6,000)

☒

(43)

Middle income (\$6,000-\$15,000)

☐

High income (above \$15,000)

☐

Are specific diagnostic tech-
niques or instruments used to:

Determine each student's
level of reading readi-
ness or skill (e.g., his
reading grade level)?

YES

NO

☒
☐

(44)

(If yes, please specify)

McCall-Crabs Standard Test Lessons in
Reading, Informal Reading Inventories,

Slosson Oral Reading Test

Determine each student's
strengths, weaknesses,

YES

NO

☒
☐

(45)

and difficulties in lan-
guage and reading skills
(e.g., difficulty with
decoding)?

(If yes, please specify)

SRA Multi-Level Achievement Tests,
Informal Reading Inventories, MacMillan
Spectrum of Skills tests (Pre & Post),
"+4" diagnostic tests

In this program, how many hours
per week are scheduled for the
subject Language Arts?

Less than 2 hours

☐

(46)

2 hours to 3 hours 59 minutes

☐

4 hours to 5 hours 59 minutes

☒

6 hours to 7 hours 59 minutes

☐

8 hours to 9 hours 59 minutes

☐

10 hours to 11 hours 59 minutes

☐

12 hours or more

☐

What summary statistics were used in the analysis of program data?

- | | YES | NO | |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------|
| Means or medians | ☒ | ☐ | (47) |
| Standard deviations or variances | ☒ | ☐ | (48) |
| Covariances or correlation coefficients | ☒ | ☐ | (49) |
| Frequency counts, percentages, or proportions | ☒ | ☐ | (50) |
| Significance tests | ☒ | ☐ | (51) |
| Methods not mentioned above
(Please specify) | ☐ | ☒ | (52) |

How large was the estimated program effect on achievement (i.e., the average gain of students in the program over and above the gain expected in a comparison group)?
(If more than one estimation, give the higher figure only.)

- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|------|
| One-tenth of a standard deviation unit | ☐ | (53) |
| One-fifth of a standard deviation unit | ☐ | |
| One-quarter of a standard deviation unit | ☐ | |
| One-third of a standard deviation unit | ☐ | |
| One-half of a standard deviation unit | ☐ | |
| Better than a half SD | ☒ | |
| Gain cannot be given this way | ☐ | |

Which of these factors were taken into explicit account in the analyses of BOTH program AND comparison data?

- | | YES | NO | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------|
| Age | ☐ | ☒ | (54) |
| Sex | ☐ | ☒ | (55) |
| Grade level | ☒ | ☐ | (56) |
| Ethnic proportions in group | ☐ | ☒ | (57) |

What was the reliability coefficient of the test used to measure reading achievement for this program?

Between .6 and .69

☐

(58)

Between .7 and .79

☐

Between .8 and .89

☐

.9 and over

☐

Given by publishers for standardization group only as over .8

☒

Not yet determined

☐

No such test was used

☐

What percentage of annual attrition or loss of students from the program was allowed for, to correct for bias in statistical analysis (e.g., by eliminating from consideration persons who start the program but do not finish)?

Was 15 percent or more

☐

(59)

Was between 10 and 14.9 percent

☐

Was between 5 and 9.9 percent

☐

Was between 0 and 4.9 percent

☒

No allowance was made for losses

☐

No losses occurred

☐

How similar were the pre- and post-tests used to determine gain in reading skills?

Were identical

☐

(60)

Were parallel forms of a single test

☒

Were consecutive forms from the same source

☐

Were similar in form, but from different sources

☐

Only one test has been applied

☐

Tests were not of reading skills

☐

No tests were applied

☐

SECTION III -- Brief Descriptive Information

In what year did the program begin operation? 1971 (61)
(Year)

How many program participants and classes (groups) are there in your program? (62)
If this is a school-based program, indicate enrollment by class and grade level.

<u>Grade or Other level</u>	<u>Number of Participants</u>	<u>Number of Classes or Groups</u>
<u>9th Grade</u>	<u>713</u>	<u>29</u>
<u>10th Grade</u>	<u>509</u>	<u>24</u>
<u>11th Grade</u>	<u>393</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>12th Grade</u>	<u>59</u>	<u>3</u>

Please list the major instructional strategies used to help clients improve their reading-related skills. Briefly describe, if necessary. (63)

Diagnostic - Prescriptive teaching, small group instruction for individualization (one-to-one tutoring), multi-media teaching. Stress is placed on oral and listening activities, role playing, and opened-ended group discussions. The eclectic approach to teaching is utilized. No one method is used consistently. Many teaching methods are utilized by each teacher -- for example -- skill building through games, choral readings, lectures, cassette recordings, films & filmstrips, etc. are all utilized as is indicated by the student's needs.

Are there any major program features (e.g., parent involvement) which are not included in your list of instructional strategies above and are not included in your list of key program objectives in the chart at the end of this questionnaire? If so, please list up to three (3) of these major program features. Briefly describe, if necessary. (64)

1. An instructional center has been set up in order to utilize all materials. In this way a large number of pupils can be reached with a great variety of materials and for less cost per pupil.
2. Paraprofessionals are utilized chiefly to assist teachers in the teaching of reading. However, they also facilitate movement of materials.
3. In-service training has been on-going. It has to a large extent been teacher directed and has provided a unifying force to the program. This training has also included visitations to other school sites.

Please list up to five (5) kinds of materials and/or equipment which are absolutely indispensable for your program, noting their availability as "commercial," "district," "teacher-prepared," "student-prepared," or other appropriate comment.

(65)

<u>Most Essential Items of Materials and/or Equipment</u>	<u>Quantity for 30 Students</u>	<u>Availability</u>
<u>Macmillan Gateway Series (12 books at 3 levels)</u>	<u>30 each book</u>	<u>Commercial</u>
<u>Macmillan Spectrum of Skills</u>	<u>1 Complete Kit</u>	<u>Commercial</u>
<u>"4" & "10" Reading & Vocabulary</u>	<u>1 Complete Kit</u>	<u>Commercial</u>
<u>Paperback books (Low reading level)</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>Commercial</u>
<u>Audio Visual Station - Cassette recorder, cassette tapes, filmstrip projectors, Rolling Tables, Teacher and pupil made games, instructional devices, and tapes.</u>		

Where are program activities physically located? If any special features were provided to suit these facilities to the program, briefly note.

(66)

<u>Location of Program Activities</u>	<u>Special Features</u>
<u>English Department in each of five secondary schools.</u>	<u>Each school allotted space for an instructional materials center. (See attachment - Item 66)</u>

What is the total cost of instructional materials for a class of 30?

(67)

*\$ 299.00 for a class of 30, to the nearest dollar

* This figure needs clarification. (See attachment - Item 67)

To the nearest dollar, roughly what portion of the funds currently required to maintain the program come from the following sources? Please specify the exact source for each category, e.g., Title III.

(68)

\$ 39,000 Federal ESAA (Emergency School Aid Act) Title VII

\$ _____ State This figure is estimated from per pupil cost for the partic-

*\$ 167,400.00 Local ipating students for one period per day.

\$ _____ Private _____

* This includes In-Service, Administration, building, upkeep, etc.

What is the average, annual per-pupil cost for the district's regular school program (i.e., cost per pupil for students outside the special reading program described herein)?

(69)

\$ 616.27, per-pupil cost for regular program

As computed on average day and membership - June 30, 1973.

What are the staff requirements for your program?

(70)

Staff Category	# Req'd. for Students	Portion of Time	Special Professional Qualifications for Program	Special Role performed in Program	Program Requires Inservice Training? If so: For How Many Hours	
					In What Skills?	
ADMINISTRATIVE:	One Coordinator	25%	English Major Reading Trained Degree in Administration and Supervision	Coordinator of all facets of the program. Responsible for reporting.	Wide Reading of professional literature.	
INSTRUCTIONAL: (Certified)	45	25%	English Major Willingness to study reading techniques and to work with students who have reading problems.	Teacher but role is far different from that of the traditional teacher.	Chiefly in reading skills-- Diagnostic testing Prescriptive (individualized) instruction Teacher-developed materials Psychology of the student with reading problems.	Initially - 50 hours Now, yearly approximately 20 hours.
PARAPROFESSIONAL: First year to have tutors	5	100%	High school diploma Willingness to work with students who have reading problems	One-to-one or small group tutor Clerk and teacher aide	Chiefly reading skills Understanding of role of tutor as it relates to pupils and teachers	
SUPPORT OR SPECIAL RESOURCE:	1 Supervisor of Federal Programs		Advanced Degree in Supervision and Administration	Supportive role and that of consultant and tutor trainer.		
OTHER:	For Teacher In-service		Reading Specialists	Trainers of teachers	Reading skills	Yearly approximately 10 hours.

What are the specific objectives of the program and how are these desired outcomes assessed? (Your responses should read consistently across columns.)

Major objectives of the program (List the key objectives, even if they cannot be adequately tested or were difficult to measure.)	What assessment techniques and instruments were used to measure student achievement of each objective in Column 1? For example: <u>Test</u> --Specify title, level, form, and developer or publisher <u>Observation</u> --Of what? By whom? <u>Teacher report</u> --Of what? <u>Questionnaire</u> --About what? Answered by whom? Etc.	What were the results? How did the target group perform or change?
To improve the reading growth of Communication Classes pupils (who are slow learners or "average" students who are under-achievers) by an average of six (6) months growth in a nine (9) month period.	All secondary-school pupils were tested in September with McCall-Grabbs Standard Test Lessons in Reading. Ten lessons were administered and the grade placement for the lessons were averaged. (The post-test lessons administered in May were of similar weight, but different lessons were used.)	<u>Acadiana High</u> - 162 students showed an average growth of one (1) year seven (7) months in a nine (9) month period. <u>Carencro High</u> - 125 students showed an average growth of one (1) year and .06 month in a nine (9) month period. <u>Comeaux High</u> - Total of 247 pupils showed average growth of 1.5 year in a nine (9) month period. <u>Lafayette High</u> - 250 students showed .78 month growth in a nine (9) month period. <u>Northside High</u> - 251 students average growth of .6 months in a nine (9) month period. <u>Parish Average</u> - 1.128 month in a nine (9) month period.
To provide the climate for pupil success in these classes.	All assessment of objectives two and three were made from teacher, principal, and student evaluations.	Please see attachment for anecdotal records.

ITEM 66

In all five secondary schools
in the parish

Principals have (whenever possible)
grouped all Communications Classes
near the Instructional & Material
Center. All schools have provided
one of the larger classrooms to be
used for this center.

Teachers in at least one school have relinquished "their classrooms".
Teachers move into teaching stations to meet classes and work in the
instructional and materials center (many times together) when not
meeting a class.

The center is used for Communications staff meetings, for one-to-one
or small group tutoring, for make-up testing, for developing materials
of instruction, and for sharing ideas.

ITEM 67

By utilizing an "instructional center" and through scheduling of materials
the same materials are used through the day for several classes. As
funds become available more equipment is being purchased and more
paperbacks are being provided. The ultimate goal being the provision of
a small audio-visual center and a small reading center in each teaching
station. Materials will continue to circulate from the large instructional
center in order that materials may be kept current and relevant on a
limited budget.

REPORT ON
ENGLISH COMMUNICATIONS CLASSES
LAFAYETTE HIGH SCHOOL

1971-1972 School Term:

Number of classes:	10
Number of teachers:	5
Number of students:	250 (approximate)
Black students:	180
White students:	70

Average growth in reading (McCall-Crabb) 7.8 months

1972-1973 School Term:

Number of classes:	20
Number of teachers:	10
Number of students:	476
Black students:	336
White students:	140

1973-1974 School Term:

Number of classes:	24
Number of teachers:	13
Number of students:	503
Black students:	360
White students:	143

Why English Communications Classes Are Needed at Lafayette High:

For the good of the students who have not mastered the reading and communications skills of their grade level

Students achieve more in their reading and other communications skills than they would had they been "swallowed up" in a classroom where the traditional texts and more traditional methods of secondary school teaching prevail.

Students find the multi-ethnic, high interest, low level reading materials more interesting, diversified, and pertinent to their lives and needs.

Students' morale is higher because they meet with day-to-day success in the English classroom.

For the good of the teacher in English communications
(See attached speech for details.)

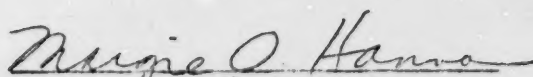
For the good of the entire school

Instruction has been revitalized in all the English classes because of the interest of the teachers in English communications classes.

Because of the results from English communications classes interest in such a program has spread to other departments.

There are fewer discipline problems with the students involved in English communications than with any other segment of the student body.

November, 1973


Margie Owen Hanna
Chairman, Department of English

Text of an Address
Delivered to
The English Division
Of the Louisiana Education Association
State Convention

November 20, 1972
Alexandria, Louisiana

by
Margie Owen Hanna

When Mrs. Moss came to my school to ask me to speak to the English teachers of the LEA State Convention, so many things immediately raced pell-mell through my mind--and heart-- things I wanted in my enthusiasm to share with you. So even though I have tried to organize my thoughts and feelings into a coherent unified exposition (what we preach in the English classroom), this speech may turn out to be more like the stream-of-consciousness of James Joyce. As I do my thing--my stream-of-consciousness-- I hope that you will come along with me. This speech, although based on some factual evidence and observations, is really colored by my own personal feelings toward the subject you wanted to hear talked about today. I do not represent anyone but myself.

Two ideas, I feel, must be talked about before I share with you some of the good things and some of the disappointments we have had at Lafayette High School in trying to meet the needs of the disadvantaged student in our modern culture. These ideas stem from the term disadvantaged.

Terms are so confining. How I hate for my students to be marked by a term. But because we have a general idea of what disadvantaged means and because certain students do have in common some of the characteristics we associate with disadvantaged--we group them and put this understood label on them--even though we may not stencil it on their backs. The point I am trying to make is this: Within this group there are as many different individuals as there are different individuals in this group attending this meeting or in any other group. These students can not be treated as a group. Each one must be treated as an individual--an individual, who may have things in common with the group, but who is an individual first. He is a human being--as complex, as paradoxical, as lovable at times, as infuriating at other times, as any other human being--or any other student.

Another idea of mine about the term disadvantaged is this: (And I apologize if I bring in my own personal feelings too much.)

I consider myself fairly well-educated and fairly well-read. But it was not until I took courses in black literature and black folk literature and discovered this wealth of vital, vibrant excitement that I feel is so much a part of this our land--that I came to this conclusion about the term disadvantaged:

Every student--perhaps the white student most of all--who has not had the opportunity or the pleasure of reading black writers as part and parcel of his classroom reading experience should be classified as disadvantaged.

Before the school term of 1970, Lafayette High School, according to faculty research backed by the census statistics, had the following characteristics: it drew its students from the richest area of Louisiana as far as per capita family income was concerned; there were no students from slum areas and most of the student body came from upper middle-class subdivisions; the average education of the parent was far above the national average. We had a class or two of "slow" students who could not read at their grade level and who could not master grammar, but generally we solved their problem by failing them; it was not our problem.

You can imagine the kind of English classes we had. We teachers were in a rut of complacency so deep that it took integration to shock us into becoming real teachers--re-evaluating ourselves as human beings and teachers, re-evaluating our goals, and facing up to our accountabilities.

Suddenly we had in our classes students whom we could not understand and who could not understand us. No communication. Students who could not do the reading assignment in literature, not because they lacked insight, but because they did not have the skills to read. Frustration. Students who saw no need in being in an English class because it had exactly nothing to do with their lives at the present or in the future. Failure. Students who felt that it was not such a privilege to attend a former all-white school or to have a white-oriented society superimposed upon them. Potential discipline problems.

Lafayette High School was ripe for English communications classes.

And in preparing ourselves to solve the problems we thought had come to us with integration, we have discovered that in actuality we had been blinking at the problems of no communication, frustration, failure, and discipline for years.

The English communications class at Lafayette High has been a rejuvenating force within the English department and, I feel, throughout the school.

Mrs. Moss has described how the program of English communications was set up in the parish, and I would like to tell you how we at Lafayette High School have structured it--not that it is ideal or perfect for we are still learning, but perhaps because we have more plusses than minuses to our credit.

The first year of English communications we had five teachers teaching ten sections of English communications. The teachers traveled to the English communications rooms where the materials were and taught two hours and then returned to their regular teaching posts.

This year we have a much better situation. We have doubled the number of teachers to ten and the number of English communications classes to twenty. Eight of the ten communications teachers have been moved to one wing where two resource rooms have been set up to house the materials and supplies that each of the ten teachers shares with the others. The teachers remain in their respective classrooms all day, and all the students that a teacher teaches during the day go to the same classroom. This arrangement is definitely a healthier atmosphere for the students.

The good it has done for the teachers who must share the materials is immeasurable. They come to the resource rooms to get the materials between classes. They come before school and at noon and after school. They come anytime they have a few minutes off. Over coffee and cigarettes these teachers exchange ideas, commiserate with and encourage each other, and in general show a spirit of camaraderie that English teachers located in other wings are missing.

We have a mailbox area in one of the resource rooms where information is easily dispersed. If a teacher has found out that something works well--a set of questions, a crossword puzzle, a word game--copies are passed out to the other teachers. There is a spirit of sharing that I have never found in any other teaching situation.

I realize I have not told the details of the set-up, only the spirit that prevails among the faculty. Mrs. Moss has made copies of the inventory of our supplies that we teachers share and also a schedule blank that is filled in weekly by the teachers. If any of you would like to question us afterwards on the mechanics of setting up and of sharing the materials, we will be happy to try to answer your questions.

But I did want you to have some idea of the attitude of these teachers who have two English communications classes of their five hours of teaching. I must add that teaching the communications classes has made better teachers out of us in every class we teach.

Enough about the teachers--but if a teacher is enthusiastic about his work, the students are going to reap the benefits, right?

In our classes we talk about communication--that's where the action is. Communication--what it means, how it works, who and what are involved to make it work--and then we set out to communicate (really communicate) with one another in the classroom.

We stress listening. But even if we listen to one another, we sometimes don't understand what each other is saying because of differences in dialect, age, and background. I ask my students to help me to understand. "I need help," I tell them--and I do. So they must slow down and reword what they want to share with me, and they do not show too much exasperation because when I tell them something that they do not understand, I do not show too much exasperation.

Another spirit that prevails in the English communications classes is one of encouragement. Students in all classes do well when they are complimented; these English communications students (who seemingly have not had too much for a teacher to compliment in the past) thrive on it. We compliment them on their behavior and cooperation. We stress the importance that they play in the success of these classes. We ask them for suggestions on improving the course of study. We try to give them constant encouragement and the feeling that they are playing an important role in the class and in the school. These are the students who have not had too much attention paid to them and they are grateful. We get our

thanks by their greetings and smiles in the halls, their dropping in to see us to tell us about their successes and failures in other areas in school. Some of the teachers report that students return to the English classroom during their free time to work on their projects. One teacher has five seniors who regularly attend a tenth-grade English communications class. They have no place to go while waiting for their bus to take them to the vocational-education center. They feel welcome to come into this class even though some of them have never been enrolled in English communications. They do the assigned work, they help with individualized instruction, they come to the rescue of the teacher in guiding the discussions, they sometimes straighten out a sophomoric attitude which they from their twelfth-grade perch can see so clearly.

These are the intangible things that cannot be measured.

One tangible response that can be measured is the response from our principals at Lafayette High. When Mr. Meyers found out that I was to speak to you, he said that he wanted to be quoted. He dictated this statement to his secretary, "The staff and I have frequently said that we have had fewer discipline problems with the students involved in the English communications classes than with any other segment of the student body."

Do English communications classes aid in better understanding between the races? I know that we teachers have talked among ourselves about making a concerted effort to get black and white students to "tear down the living walls" we all build around ourselves. I have faith that English communications classes have a better opportunity because of our materials of instruction than the other classes with their traditional texts. One thing working against us is that more white students are needed in the class; the average make-up of the classes is seventy per cent black and thirty per cent white. But we must remember too that English communications classes are an emergency measure to meet the needs right now of the students who have reached high school without the skills to read at their grade level.

In English communications classes we discuss honestly and openly relevant and sometimes potentially controversial subjects dealing with race. When we dramatize a play in class, we do not cast it according to race. A white student may play the part of

a father and a black student his son. No great thing is made out of it, but neither is it when a girl plays the role of a man.

I would like to conclude my stream-of-consciousness speech by sharing with you a few interrelated incidents that have happened this fall in my third hour English communications class. You will be the judge whether anything positive was accomplished. And perhaps you will be able to understand better the nature of the English communications class by these incidents than if you were given rows of neat statistics.

One of the things we read in the ninth grade is entitled "Mallie and Her Children." It is a chapter of the biography of Jackie Robinson which tells how Jackie's mother took her four children from Georgia to California in the late twenties. It never occurred to me that the class would not know who Jackie Robinson was. No one knew, so we did some investigation and had a couple of oral reports on him the next day. A few weeks later one of the boys came to my classroom before school to tell me that he had heard on the radio that morning that Jackie Robinson had died of a heart attack. "Now what's so great about that?" you ask. The big, tall, good-looking black boy who came to tell me this can not read second-grade material.

When third hour class time came around, I had to be the one to tell the class about Jackie Robinson's death--Frederick would not. The next day we had newspapers from the library to find out how much space was given to Jackie Robinson. We clipped all the articles and, because I really wanted the students to get the impact of the tributes, I read some of the best ones to the class. We talked about the coverage his death had received on television. News programs had not only reported the news of his death but also commentators on the networks paid special tributes to him.

One day this fall we read a shortened version of the movie Sounder. We ran across the names of Harriet Tubman and W. E. B. DuBois. Now some of the class had heard of the Underground Railroad, but no one knew who W. E. B. DuBois was. We found out when Frederick came to class with a book he had voluntarily check out of the library on Mr. DuBois. He wanted me to read something about the man to the class.

Soon after we had read Sounder, Frederick came to class to report that he had seen a TV movie about the Underground Railroad. This time with the help of other students who had also seen the program Frederick did talk to the class.

Friday, Frederick brought something else to class--a newspaper with the tragic story of the deaths at Southern University. How should I handle this? Honestly and openly? There followed a discussion pro and con among the blacks and whites--blacks disagreeing with blacks sometimes, whites disagreeing with whites sometimes, blacks disagreeing with whites sometimes. We did not solve the tragedy of Southern; we did not sit in judgment of its causes. But as the students left class Friday, I saw two black boys and a white boy still talking--communicating. That picture was a good one for me to begin my Thanksgiving holidays and also a good one to end this speech.

Comeaux High School

JACK W. BAKER, Principal
Rt. 1, Della Drive
Lafayette, Louisiana

ROBERT L. MORRIS
Assistant Principal

MIKE SIMMONS
Athletic Director

December 1, 1972

Mrs. Eula Moss
Lafayette Parish Coordinator
Lafayette Parish School Board
Lafayette, La. 70501

Dear Mrs. Moss:

Six English teachers in the Comeaux High School are now serving a total of 247 students in 12 communications classes. Of this total, there are 92 black and 155 white students. These figures represent a significant increase in the number of classes and in student enrollment in these non-traditional classes. All of these students are classified as lacking the necessary skills in reading; and many of them, as being "disadvantaged" in experiential backgrounds.

Last year 6 teachers were serving 178 students in 6 classes. Of this number, 42 were black and 136 were white students. Based on scores of diagnostic tests and achievement tests administered in early September and late May and representing an overall study of all communications classes, an average growth reading level of 1.5--one year, five months--was shown by the students.

In the brief period during which communication classes have been in operation, a definite improvement in the reading skills and habits of the students is notable. However, the need for additional teacher aids--from paraprofessionals to teaching materials--is evident.

Sincerely yours,

Pearl Hutchinson

Pearl Hutchinson
Head of the English Department
Comeaux High School

- NANCY MOUNCE'S REMARKS
Regarding:
COMMUNICATION CLASSES AND PARAPROFESSIONALS

I. Materials -

- A. Plus Four is superb - The variety of materials as well as the tremendous span of ability provided for makes teaching (by individual needs) much easier and much more effective.
- B. Plus Ten - The students are not interested in it; it appears to be too difficult for them.
- C. The wealth of materials - The variety including Basic Reading Skills, Be a Better Reader, Gateways, etc. are excellent. Perhaps not in and of themselves for classroom usage. But, for example, if I have a student who is weak in a particular skill, I can obtain such a wealth of materials to aid him that he cannot help but be impressed in some fashion. Different methods appeal to different teachers and to different students, thus the variety of materials available creates a more effective teaching environment.
- D. Scope - The students love the fact that they have something different. Many have never seen magazines and look forward to it - quite a unique experience!

- II. The paraprofessionals, in general have done much more than is expected of them. Their willingness to do anything to help the students and teachers has sincerely been an inspiration to me. Mrs. King and Mrs. Boyd, particularly, should be praised for work - above and beyond their call of duty. I don't think enough can be said of their willingness to spend their time and efforts for the betterment of these children. We owe them a great deal, indeed - including our sense of humor and sanity.

The work of the paraprofessionals in the classroom depends heavily on the personality involved. The working environment would be much improved if more distinct boundaries of responsibility and specific duties are outlined at the outset. The paraprofessionals should be aware of what, exactly, is expected by each individual teacher - which is a large order to fill. Periodic, scheduled conferences should be held in order to re-evaluate the program and to discuss individual students.

III. Did not attend.

IV. The program, as a whole, is excellent - and most effective. The students and the teachers involved seem to have a very "healthy" and wholesome attitude toward the work. The materials available, the use of paraprofessionals, and the "overseeing" of the total situation by a coordinator makes for a unified, orderly situation - a situation that is reflected in the attitudes of the people involved.

Inherent in the success of this program, like most ventures of this sort I assume, is the vague, abstract term "personality". The desire to help students with problems, to be patient, and to understand the very special needs of these children is mandatory to the program. Children know sincerity when it is displayed, and they appreciate it. The format of the program, the facilities, and the materials would prove fruitless were it not for the desire of everyone involved to create a happier life for these very frustrated children.

I feel that the Communications Classes idea at Lafayette is superior. It is the best that I've seen since I've been teaching. The Materials are excellent, and the organization of their use is the key. It is really unnecessary to have classroom sets of materials when they're used only 1-2 periods per day. The schedule that Mrs. Hanna has organized provides for ~~comp~~ maximum use of the materials.

There it not for our paraprofessionals, the good materials that we have would prove less valuable. The aid that they give us in tutoring, administering tests, carrying on group discussions, scoring tests, filing papers, keeping us abreast of what this student needs to do, or what that student needs help in — all of these enable us to see progress rather than lagging interest and stagnation.

Jayce Kyle

E.M.

REFLECTIONS

My, have these past few months flown by! And I have had experiences that too few student teachers ever know. I have known disgust, disapproval, disappointment, dislike, and many other negatives. But I have also known acceptance, laughter, communication, understanding, and love. It is the positive experiences that really count.

I did not begin my student teaching with many positive views except that I would lick the situation one way or another. Unfortunately, my first approach was harsh, strict, and very negative. After many tears, prayers, and much encouragement from Mrs. Ray, I began to alter my approach to one of acceptance and friendliness. Gradually, oh so slowly, we began to accept one another as real people with real needs, desires, and problems. We learned to laugh at one another and ourselves. We learned to apologize and to express appreciation more often. We learned to be associates and friends.

I do not think that our friendliness toward each other hampered our relationships as teacher and students; rather, I think it enhanced the relationships. I learned to avoid yelling and loud threats. I tried to give them alternatives even if one was often going to the office. I realized that my second approach was more effective when Eugene and I bargained over his grade and mine. Rather than loudly threaten him, I quietly delivered the ultimatum; if my grade suffered because he misbehaved while my college supervisor was present, then I would see to it that his grade would also suffer. Believe it or not, Eugene obliged, and even commented later that he hoped I would get a good grade. I wish that I could say that I never have to resort to threats with my students, but that would be impractical and inconceivable with some students I have taught. I have, however, learned to avoid loud threats and I have learned to reason with them in softer, more pleasant tones.

I have learned so much--probably much more than my students ever did from me. They have taught me the importance of giving of myself, of accepting others, of spending time (even seconds) with individuals to discuss every day living. I never faced the problems that my Communications students face every day. I have had advantages that many of them may never have. In this way, they have taught me about life as others live it. That is quite a hard lesson to learn! Why should we spend day after day teaching concepts that are so unimportant, so unimpressive to these students? They want to learn about the better ways to live, not why the splitting of the atom is so very important. They need and want the basics of life--this is what they have made me realize.

Too often we idealistically determine the "best situations" for students that we do not understand. How can we say that low achievers must be placed in regular classrooms? that we cannot "group" students on the basis of intellectual ability? These students will drown in the mainstream of the regular classroom, experiencing too little success to merit their trying to perform. For too long, these students have suffered failure, rejection; they are "F" and "D" students in the regular classes. My students have had success based on achievements that were within their ability range; they have been rewarded for doing good work that was definitely all that I could expect of them to produce. Why should we rob them of these successes? Unless we have had one-to-one experiences with these students, we are not really capable of making judgments that will rob them of situations where some success is assured.

I know my students and they want attention, respect, and success. They are trying to wade through the muck of our predetermined ideas of what education is supposed to be. Until we as educators can experience the relationships that I have had with my students, we are incapable of really understanding how very important it is that the low achiever be allowed at least one period a day in a class situation where his work is judged according to his ability. Most of my students failed at least half of their other classes the second six weeks. They have failed in regular classes where the teachers may not realize that they do not really possess the ability to do all that the regular student can. It grieves me to think that the controversy over student "grouping" may cause my students another class of failure.

Gee, I have learned so much that I could talk for hours of experiences with my students, of realizations that have shattered many of my previous narrow-minded views, of real relationships with students who need more in life than to learn some of the foolish things we stress. We cannot treat these students as we do regular or advanced students; they need their own topics of study, their own level of student to compete with.

In these past few months I have developed ideas and memories that will remain with me for many years to come. I have actually seen how other people regard life and I have had to broaden my outlook on life. When I realize how lucky I have been in teaching a Communications class, I cannot help but pity those student teachers who taught regular or advanced classes. I would recommend selection of a Communications or low-achiever class to anyone who really wants to know what teaching is all about!

JOHN WAYNE CHALSON
Assistant Principal



A. J. FITTS
Assistant Principal

TERREBONNE HIGH SCHOOL

WARREN G. SEVIN, Principal

P. O. Box 911

HOUMA, LOUISIANA 70360

February 19, 1973

Mrs. Moss
Lafayette Parish School Board
Lafayette, Louisiana

Dear Mrs. Moss:

I am a former teacher in the Lafayette Parish System having taught Speech at Carencro High School.

I am presently teaching English in the Terrebonne Parish School System at Terrebonne High School. I have been asked to write to you concerning the English Communications Program in Lafayette Parish.

We at Terrebonne are faced with the same dilemma that Lafayette Parish schools faced two years ago. We are having difficulty meeting the academic needs of students in our classes due to the lack of uniform ability level grouping.

Therefore, we would like to ask you to send us all possible information concerning the program now being used in Lafayette Parish. Please include the criteria for choosing the various levels such as honors, regular and supportive. Too, we would like information covering the educational materials available to us, as well as information on the six point grading system.

Any aid you can give us will be greatly appreciated. Please give my regards to Sally and the other staff members at Carencro High.

Sincerely yours,

Barbara H. Rolleg
Barbara H. Rolleg

This booklet is a compilation of material utilized in the first "Communication Classes" workshop for the teachers who were to conduct these classes. It is not a "finished publication". It is simply a reminder of topics discussed and of the philosophy which is basic to the program.

Since this booklet was prepared for the teachers, many other workshops have been held. Each teacher now has a file of "handouts" to which he may refer as needed.

Also, teachers throughout the parish have shared plans, techniques, etc. (See: skills book prepared by Nancy Mounce for all Communication teachers.)

Communication Class &
Nancy Mounce's booklets
were attached

END

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